

**NATIVE STUDIES**  
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**A SURVEY OF NATIVE STUDIES PROGRAMS  
IN THE U.S.A.**

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The American Indian Studies Center at U.C.L.A. did a survey of Native studies programs in the U.S.A. (Heth and Guyette, 1984). Full questionnaires were returned by 107 colleges and universities on their programs and by 117 Native communities (with about a 70% - 30% rural-urban division) that assessed their education and training needs. The following tables give the 1980 U.S. census data on Indian higher education, the number of colleges and universities with Native studies programs by state, and the basic results of their survey.

Table 1 shows that U.S. Indians have a higher completion rate than the national average for the first three years of college. This is similar to the results of a 1978-79 study that showed that Indians in the U.S. were graduating with baccalaureate degrees at a higher rate than the U.S. national average and that the frequency of their disciplinary specializations generally matched the national pattern (Price, 1982). The 1980 census data, however, indicates that there is a

TABLE 1: 1980 Census Data on the Completion of College  
and University by Years

	Indians		U.S. Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1-3 years	17.6%	15.5%	16.1%	15.3%
4 years	4.4%	3.5%	9.8%	7.5%
5 or more	4.8%	2.9%	10.3%	5.5%

TABLE 2: The Number of Colleges and Universities With  
Native Studies Programs by State (N = 104)

California	19	Alaska	2
Oklahoma	8	Iowa	2
Washington	8	Kansas	2
Wisconsin	8	Nebraska	2
Arizona	7	North Carolina	2
Minnesota	6	North Dakota	2
Montana	6	Illinois	1
New Mexico	6	Maine	1
Utah	5	New Hampshire	1
South Dakota	4	Oregon	1
Colorado	3	Pennsylvania	1
Michigan	3	Wyoming	1
New York	3		

marked dropout rate for Indians in the fourth year of college. In both the national and the Indian data we see that slightly more men complete at all college year levels than women.

Generally the small two-year and four-year colleges were better in such things as (1) the recruitment and tenure of American Indians in the faculty in general and for the program; (2) the recruitment, financial support, and tutoring of Native students; and (3) in interacting with local Native communities. The institutions in general were supportive of making a special effort in the recruitment and services of Native *students*, but not very supportive in the recruitment and tenure of Native *faculty*. Native faculty, for example, had difficulty getting any released time for their extra-curricular Native studies counseling, committee work, Native community work, and research work.

The survey of the high needs of Native communities indicated their desires for people trained in the following occupations, ranked according to the frequency with which the occupation was mentioned (Table 4). Business manager was the most frequently mentioned, by 73% of the communities, and the ranked list is presented here down to where at least 41% of the communities indicated a high need for that profession.

There are important differences between the training of people in Native studies programs and the perceived needs of professionals by Native communities. Native studies academics tend to emphasize educating students in the liberal arts to be knowledgeable about the holistic nature of Native cultures. Native communities, on the other hand, indicate a need that is being met in counseling and an *unmet need* for trained professionals in the business and health fields.

TABLE 3: American Indian Studies Survey

Program Type:	
Department status or program administered by a department	46%
Major offered	17%
Minor only	37%
Offer a graduate degree in American Indian studies	6%
Have an American Indian studies research unit	14%
Indian counselor on campus	69%
Institution Type:	
Two year college	30%
Four year college	31%
University - MA highest degree	14%
University - PhD highest degree	25%
The Most Common Career Programs With an Indian Culture Emphasis:	No. of Programs
Elementary or Pre-School Teacher	19
Artist	12
Historian	11
Family and Child Welfare Counselor	10
School administrator	9
Tribal manager	8
Art Educator	8
Alcohol and drug abuse counselor	8
Mental health counselor	7
College teacher	7
Interpreter	6
Employment counselor	5
Sociologist	5

In its conclusions the study called for (1) the development of a national Native studies association, (2) the promotion of Natives as professional role models, (3) practical workshops to prepare students for community life, (4) the development of strategies to retain Native studies faculty, (5) increased support for research and publication, and (6) more research on students who leave college before completing their degrees.

TABLE 4: Occupations Highly Needed by Native Communities

1. Business Manager
2. Alcohol and drug abuse counselor
5. Registered nurse
4. Doctor
5. Employment counselor
6. Legal assistant
7. Mental health counselor
8. Nurse - LPN
9. Tribal manager
10. Family and child welfare counselor
11. Lawyer
12. Accountant
15. Dentist
14. Planner
15. Law enforcement officer
16. Elementary or pre-school teacher
17. Social worker
18. Nutritionist
19. Computer programmer
20. Electrician
21. Hospital or clinic administrator
22. Personnel manager

## REFERENCES

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 1982 A Note on Indian Graduations From U.S. Four-Year Colleges and Universities. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 2(1):181-185.